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WTIC: 'Americana' Spotlights Romanov

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By MAUDE FILES ZIMMER

The reappearance of the Romanoffs of Russia will be the intriguing subject discussed each afternoon next week from Monday through Friday on the WTIC radio program, "Americana."

Beginning Monday, master of ceremonies Dick Bertel will interview three people most involved in the story: New York publisher Robert Speller who last November published the book, "Anastasia," memoirs of the Grand Duchess Anastasia Nicholaevna of Russia; his elder son Robert Speller Jr., and Princess Marina Dmitrievna Kropotkin, author of Spellers' forthcoming book, "The Reappearance of the Romanoffs."

THE PRINCESS AND THE MESSRS. SPELLER will appear as "guests of the week" for five afternoons on the "Americana" hour, 2:05 to 3 p. m.

Details of the fate of the Romanoffs will be revealed. Their escape in 1918 from the "death house" in Ekaterinburg, Siberia; the governments and authorities who granted them asylum; the Grand Duchess Anastasia's life in America as "Mrs. Eugenia Smith"; the aid rendered to U. S. Intelligence Service from 1958 to 1960 by the Tsarevich.

The whereabouts of the Tsarevich and his sisters, the four Grand Duchesses will provide a fascinating climax to the series of radio interviews.

According to history the Russian Imperial Family and four attendants were brutally assassinated July 16, 1918, in Ekaterinburg, Siberia, where they had been held as prisoners of the Bolsheviks. Through the years most of the stories about the fate of the Romanoffs have contributed to that myth; but early and subsequent statements from responsible persons, many closely connected with the Imperial Family, have maintained that the Romanoffs were not murdered.

ROBERT SPELLER AND HIS TWO SONS, Robert Jr. and Jon, have spent endless hours proving and disproving various aspects of the cast. Their research has taken them back through the years to rumors and news accounts which began to trickle out of Russia soon after the purported massacre. As early as Dec. 19, 1918 the New York Times carried an Associated Press story datelined Warsaw, relating reports that the Dowager Empress, still in the Crimea, had heard from her son. During the next three months the New York Times carried several more articles from Associated Press and British Wireless Service correspondents—interviews with persons who told stories of how the escape of the Imperial Family was accomplished.

The Spellers painstakingly gathered information from every available source; and their first real break came with the discovery of the Grand Duchess Anastasia, living in seclusion in Chicago as Mrs. Eugenia Smith. Having convinced themselves through cautious methods and tests that she was indeed the Grand Duchess, they published her memoirs in book form in November 1963.

Ensuing publicity both here and abroad aroused anew the public interest in the Romanoff family. Visitors appeared at the publisher's offices. Among them was a distinguished-looking man of middle age who expressed his anxious desire to talk to the Grand Duchess. The Spellers in a short time were able to verify what they had surmised. He was the Tsarevich Alexei Nicholaevich!

They arranged for him to meet his sister. Separated since her departure from Warsaw in 1922, the reunion was both touching and convincing as they spoke together for hours in Russian and English.

Continued

information regarding the Imperial Family and shed more light on their escape from death and the events which followed. Details of his story appeared in the Hartford Times articles on October 10 and 17: How both Bolsheviks and White Russians, with aid from the Emperor of Japan, conspired to effect the escape; how members of the family, for safety's sake, proceeded by separate devious routes to Poland where assumed names and false papers were arranged by Marshal Josef Pilsudski through Colonel Alexander Prystor and Colonel Wacław Szalewicz. The family remained together for a short time before a second separation. Those articles told of the latter days of the Czar and Czarina, who died in Poland; the connection of the Tsarevich, as "Colonel Goleniewski," with the Polish Secret Service; and the valuable aid rendered by him to the Central Intelligence Agency of the U. S. Government from April 1958 to December 1960.

Because of his contacts with the U. S. agencies, his situation became precarious and he was forced to flee Poland into West Germany in December 1960. Still using the name of Colonel Goleniewski, he and his German-born fiancée arrived in the U. S. January 12, 1961 through the assistance of the CIA. The couple was married in a civil ceremony in March 1961.

AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN THIS COUNTRY, "Colonel Goleniewski" remained in close touch with U. S. officials. When queried recently by newspaper reporters about the identity of the Colonel as the Tsarevich, former CIA Director Allen Dulles' comment was courteous but brief: "This story may all be true or it may not be. I do not choose to discuss the subject further." Although refusing to confirm or deny the colonel's other identity, appreciation of his services was expressed by the sponsorship last year of a special bill in Congress (HR 5507) to grant him U. S. citizenship.

The bill states that "he has collaborated with the government in an outstanding manner and under circumstances which have involved great personal risk."

Since the reunion with his sister Anastasia and revelation of his true identity, the Tsarevich has been earnestly trying to emerge from seclusion in spite of the difficulties involved. Many interested people have entered the picture—among them Father Georgi, Count Grabbe, the Protopresbyter (Administrative Director) of the Russian Orthodox Church in exile, New York City. Father Georgi (whose uncle was aide to the late Tsar Nicholas II) persuaded the Tsarevich that it was essential for him to be united to his wife in religious ceremony, since he was titular head of the church, prior to the imminent birth of their first child.

A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE was issued on September 29, 1964, by the City Clerk, Borough of Manhattan. The groom's name appears as Aleksei N. Romanoff, Colonel retired, self-employed. His birthplace is listed as Peterhof, Russia; and his parents as Nicholas A. Romanoff of Russia and Aleksandra F. von Hesse, born in Germany. The Parish Register of the church contains a record of their marriage September 30, 1964.

The birth of a girl baby, Tatiana Alekseevna Romanoff, is duly recorded in Manhasset, N. Y.; and the father's name is listed as Aleksei Nicholaevich Romanoff.

This, then, is a brief preview of the story which will be unfolded in detail next week by Dick Bertel and his guests. Radio listeners will be accorded a rare treat when they hear the story of how the Imperial Family of Russia has become a part of Americana.

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PEOPLE AND A STORY: From left, Father Georgi Grabbe, the Tsarevna and the Tsarevich Aleksei Nicholaevich, with Grand Duchess Olga. Standing is Tatiana.

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